

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SEOUL 09747 171136Z
ACTION NODS-00

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S E C R E T SEOUL 9747

NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, KS, US
SUBJ: TONGSUN PARK PROBLEM

REF: A. SEOUL 9568, B. SEOUL 9659

1. I MET ALONE WITH FOREIGN MINISTER AT HIS PRIVATE RESIDENCE
EARLY THIS MORNING TO DISCUSS TONGSUN PARK AFFAIR. MY PURPOSE
WAS TO PRESS FOR ROKG ACTION AS WELL AS GET CURRENT READING.

2. FONMIN SAID THAT HE HAD BEEN AT NATIONAL ASSEMBLY BUDGET
SESSION FULL TIME THIS WEEK WITH SESSION GOING ON FROM TEN
AM TO EVENING AND HAD HAD LITTLE OPPORTUNITY TO ACT ON
TONGSUN PARK QUESTION. OUR ASSURANCES GIVEN NOVEMBER 11
(REF A) HAD BEEN PASSED ON TO JUSTICE MINISTRY BUT HE HAD
HAD NO REPORT BACK. I PRESSED HIM TO WHETHER ASSURANCES
HAD BEEN TRANSMITTED TO TONGSUN PARK, AS WELL AS SUGGESTION
REGARDING HUNDLEY. HE SAID THAT HE WAS NOT AWARE OF ANY
CONTACT WITH TONGSUN PARK IN RECENT DAYS AND INDICATED SUCH
CONTACTS WERE LEFT ENTIRELY IN HANDS OF JUSTICE MINISTRY.
(I AM BEGINNING TO SUSPECT THAT FONMIN IS NOT BEING KEPT
INFORMED ABOUT JUSTICE MINISTRY EFFORTS AND IS SERVING
LARGELY AS SPOKESMAN RATHER THAN PARTICIPANT IN PROCESS
OF RESOLVING TONGSUN PARK AFFAIR.

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3. WHEN I BELABORED THE FONMIN REGARDING LACK OF CONTACTS
WITH TONGSUN PARK, HE WAS QUITE DEFENSIVE. I POINTED OUT
THAT THERE WAS NO ALTERNATIVE TO TONGSUN PARK'S APPEARING IN
TRIAL IN US AND THAT THIS WAS CRITICAL TO INITIATING PROCESS OF
IMPROVING US-KOREA RELATIONSHIP. I STRESSED THAT CURRENT
DETERIORATION IN OUR RELATIONS COULD ONLY BENEFIT NORTH
KOREANS, WHO MUST BE MOST PLEASED BY THIS DEVELOPMENT. I

ASKED WHETHER ROKG WAS PREPARED TO STAND ASIDE AND LET TONGSUN PARK STAND AS OBSTACLE TO KOREA'S OWN SECURITY. FINALLY, I ASKED HIM WHETHER RUMORS I HAD HEARD, SPECIFICALLY FROM SPEAKER CHONG IL-KWON (SEE BELOW) THAT TONGSUN PARK WAS AFRAID HE WOULD BE TOSSED INTO JAIL ONCE HE CAME TO US, WERE TRUE AND POSED SERIOUS PROBLEM.

4. FONMIN CONFIRMED THAT TONGSUN PARK CONTINUES TO EXPRESS HIS FEARS ABOUT BEING JAILED IN US; I PRESSED FONMIN TO TRANSMIT TO TONGSUN PARK OUR ASSURANCES ALREADY GIVEN ON HIS SAFE RETURN TO KOREA.

5. FONMIN THEN ACKNOWLEDGED THE FORCE OF MY REASONING AND SAID FRANKLY AND PRIVATELY HIS PRINCIPAL PROBLEM WAS TO OVERCOME PRESIDENT PARK'S RESISTANCE TO BOWING TO OVERT US PRESSURE, MENTIONING SPECIFICALLY VARIETY OF ALLEGED EFFORTS FROM CONGRESSIONAL RESOLUTION TO RECENT STATEMENTS BY CIVILETTI. HE SAID THAT THIS ALMOST INSTINCTIVE RESISTANCE TO SO-CALLED PRESSURE WAS SHARED BY A NUMBER OF KOREANS, WHICH EMBASSY CAN CONFIRM. ON THE OTHER HAND, PRESIDENT

PARK HAS NO OBJECTION TO TONGSUN PARK GOING TO US IF "PROPER" PROCEDURES RESPECTING ROK SOVEREIGNTY CAN BE WORKED OUT.

6. I RESPONDED THAT PRESSURES CAME NOT FROM US ACTIONS
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BUT FROM VERY DETERIORATION OF RELATIONS AND PUBLIC AND CONGRESSIONAL REACTION TO TONGSUN PARK AFFAIR IN US. ONLY WAY TO COUNTERACT THESE WAS TO RESOLVE TONGSUN PARK AFFAIR SOONEST THROUGH HIS AVAILABILITY AT US COURT TRIAL. FONMIN REITERATED PAST THEME THAT HE WAS CONVINCED THAT ONCE PROCESS WAS STARTED OF SPEAKING PERSONALLY TO TONGSUN PARK IN SEOUL, END RESULT WOULD BE HIS WILLINGNESS TO TESTIFY IN US. BUT HE EXPRESSED GRAVE DOUBT AS TO WHETHER WRITTEN ASSURANCES TO THIS FACT COULD BE PROVIDED IN ADVANCE. IF TONGSUN PARK AGREED TO US PERSUASION TO COME TO US THEN ISSUE OF SO-CALLED US PRESSURE COULD BE RESOLVED TO "SATISFACTION OF KOREAN PUBLIC." I REITERATED WE NEEDED THESE ASSURANCES IN ADVANCE AND I WAS DISAPPOINTED AT THE APPARENT LACK OF EFFORT ON THE PART OF ROKG TO SEEK THEM. I URGED FONMIN TO RETURN TO THE FRAY AND PRESS FROM WITHIN HIS GOVERNMENT FOR A MEANINGFUL AND EFFECTIVE DIALOGUE WITH TONGSUN PARK. WITH A BIT OF NUDGING FROM ME HE AGREED TO CONSULT WITH KCIA DIRECTOR AND SPEAKER CHONG, POINTING UP PARTICULARLY SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS VIS-A-VIS NORTH KOREA THAT I HAD RAISED WITH HIM.

7. PRIOR TO MY MEETING WITH FONMIN I HAD EARLIER MORNING

CONVERSATION WITH SPEAKER CHONG EXPRESSING MY GRAVE CONCERNS
AND RAISING WITH HIM AMONG OTHER ARGUMENTS SECURITY CONSID-
ERATIONS. CHONG AGREED ON NEED FOR TONGSUN PARK TO TESTIFY IN
US AND CONCLUDED THAT THERE WAS NO REASON FOR "THIS THIRD-
RATE PUNK" TO SO DEEPLY AND ADVERSELY AFFECT KOREA'S SECURITY.
HE OFFERED TO SPEAK TO FONMIN AS WELL AS OTHERS INVOLVED, BUT
CLEARLY SHIED AWAY FROM GOING AFTER PRESIDENT PARK WHOSE
RESISTANCE TO SO-CALLED US PRESSURE HE TOO MADE REFERENCE.
HE ALSO MENTIONED AS NOTED ABOVE TONGSUN PARK'S ALLEGED FEAR
OF BEING THROWN INTO JAIL ONCE HE LANDED ON US SOIL, WHICH
I ASSURED HIM WAS NOT OUR INTENTION.
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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
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